

AFGHANISTAN AND STABILITY IN CENTRAL ASIA

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL ABDULLAH HALIM
Afghan Army

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:

Approved for Public Release.
Distribution is Unlimited.

USAWC CLASS OF 2009

Only a work of the United States Government is not subject to copyright. Based upon the nature of a particular student-author's employment, a paper may not be a work of the United States Government and may, in fact, be protected by copyright.

The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.



U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050

Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE 30 MAR 2009		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Afghanistan and Stability in Central Asia				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Abdullah Halim				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College ,122 Forbes Ave.,Carlisle,PA,17013-5220				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT see attached					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 26	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

PROPERTY OF U.S. ARMY

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

AFGHANISTAN AND STABILITY IN CENTRAL ASIA

by

Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Halim
Afghan Army

Colonel David A. Kelley
Project Adviser

Only a work of the United States Government is not subject to copyright. Based upon the nature of a particular student-author's employment, a paper may not be a work of the United States Government and may, in fact, be protected by copyright.

The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Halim
TITLE: Afghanistan and Stability in Central Asia
FORMAT: Strategy Research Project
DATE: 23 March 2009 WORD COUNT: 4,815 PAGES: 26
KEY TERMS: Terrorism, Taliban, Al Qaeda, Security, Economy
CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

Afghanistan has suffered from three decades of war. This paper will address the background leading to the current situation in Afghanistan, the geopolitical significance of Afghanistan, and its linkage with Central and South Asia. This paper will take an in-depth look at Afghanistan's connection with terrorism, and the current threats and challenges for the security situation in Afghanistan. The paper will close by capturing successes within Afghanistan to date and by identifying requirements for the future, in order to foster continued growth and development of the country.

AFGHANISTAN AND STABILITY IN CENTRAL ASIA

Afghanistan is a country in Southern Asia that links Central Asian countries to Southern Asia. The people of Afghanistan have suffered from three decades of war — Soviet invasion, civil war, and terrorism. All these have their reasons which will be stated below. The war itself has not only had an impact on Afghanistan, but also on the region and world. One must study the background of the country to understand the issue.

Background

In 1978, after a military coup, the then Afghan regime was overthrown and Afghanistan People's Democratic Party (AFDPDP) took power. Unfortunately, in rather short time a new conflict between AFDPDP and some Afghan people who were against the party started, consequently, the conflict turned to an armed one. At that time the main supporter for the Afghan regime was the Soviet Union; Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan to provide the Afghan government troops with their direct military assistance. Those who resisted Afghan and Soviet troops were guerilla forces called Mujahidin. It was hard for the Mujahidin to improve their organizations and tactics inside the country, so they left Afghanistan and went to neighboring countries, especially Pakistan and Iran, where they got support from the United States, China, Saudi Arabia and some other countries. The main support lines, especially for military equipment, were channeled through Pakistan.

In addition to military equipment, the Mujahidin were supported by foreign fighters from some Arabic countries as well. Afghan Mujahidin did maintain some training centers in the country too. Soviet troops stayed in Afghanistan for ten years

and finally in 1988 they began a withdrawal which was completed in 1989. As a result the Afghan government had to defend itself alone and finally in the spring of 1992 collapsed, allowing the Mujahidin to come to power. Regretfully, the Mujahidin were organized in separate groups. During the war and once in power they were unable to unite. Afghanistan became divided into spheres of control and very soon heavy fighting among Mujahidin factions began, leading the country to **civil war**. In 1994 a movement called “**Taliban**” emerged to enforce law throughout Afghanistan. Taliban were comprised of former Mujahidin fighters who ceased to fight in favor of their factions, and came together to establish a new movement. There were very close relations and cooperation between the Taliban and Al-Qaeda from Taliban’s very emergence. At first Taliban captured Qandahar, a province located in the South, and within the next six years about 95% of the country was under their control.

When in power, the Taliban implemented a very strict interpretation of Islam. Since the Taliban movement emerged in Pakistan, Pakistani people were also affected by Talibanism. Central Asian states, north of the Amu Darya River also became vulnerable to the Taliban extremists who sought influence beyond the Afghan border rather than tend to the more important business of building up Afghanistan. The Islamic extremists posed a serious threat to Central Asia. Afghanistan was the country where Islamic extremists from the rest of world came together, planned and aimed their attacks at various countries and increased their area of influence, especially in neighboring countries like Central Asia’s. These Islamic extremists crossed the borders and entered Central Asian countries, killing soldiers and conducting terrorist activities. The extremists did not only include Afghans, they included Uzbeks, Tajiks, Arabs,

Pakistani and Chechens too. Afghanistan became a sanctuary and stronghold for extremists. In order to recruit and train their fighters, Taliban & Al-Qaeda established training centers in Afghanistan, and moved forward into Northern Afghanistan where they encountered resistance. Their intention was to capture the whole country and then gain leverage in Central Asia, but resistance groups in Northern Afghanistan made it difficult. After September, 11, 2001 the International Community, led by the US, started supporting Afghan resistance forces known as the North Alliance that were fighting the Taliban, and the Taliban lost power.

Geopolitical Significance of Afghanistan

Afghanistan has seduced many world powers with its geographical position as a country considered to be at the crossroads to riches, be it Alexander the Great attempting to go to Central Asia, the Mongol route to India, or the Soviet Union wanting to taste the warm waters of the Indian ocean. Afghanistan has often been the place that would have completed a perfect empire. Politics, however, are not constant; Afghanistan's political significance has oscillated with historical developments since the end of the great game (the battle of Central Asia between Russia and Great Britain). In the past, when the silk routes passing through the territory enriched cities like Balkh and Herat, Afghanistan's geographic position had functioned to the advantage of the inhabitants of the country. However since Afghanistan assumed its significance as a buffer state between empires, it has often been a mere battle ground for the proxy wars of external interest groups to the extreme detriment of its inhabitants.

Linkage with Situation in Central and South Asia

As a landlocked state, the political and economic linkages between Afghanistan and its neighbors constitute a significant determinant of patterns of economic growth, security and political development. Moreover, given the porous nature of Central Asian borders and continuing unrest over the contested Durand Line separating Afghanistan and Pakistan, building a broad based consensus in the region around political and economic issues is essential. In light of the transnational nature of security threats, whether spawned by drugs or terrorism, collaboration between intelligence and other security forces is a precondition for regional and global stability. Trade, economic growth, and poverty reduction are important crosscutting themes in guaranteeing peace and stability within the region. Indeed, improvements in the road and transport sector in Afghanistan would enhance the competitive edge of all economies that trade with and through Afghanistan. Since trade relations, supported by improved trade logistics, are a key to mobilizing economic interests around peace, the Afghan administration in partnership with the international community has endeavored to strengthen bilateral and multilateral trading relations. In pursuit of this objective the Afghan government has endorsed a progressive and open trading regime, has simplified the new import tariff structure, and is embarking on significant investments in both custom modernization and trade facilitation. In many respects the trade regimes of surrounding states are far more restrictive than Afghanistan's, and further measures will need to focus on freeing up trade relations and enticing the untaxed, informal economy into the formal trading framework.

Threats and Challenges for the Security Situation in Afghanistan

Terrorism is defined as violence, the threat of violence, or any harmful acts committed for political or ideological purposes. Terrorists target, and disregard the safety of non-combatants (civilians) deliberately. Sometimes terrorists attempt to force political change by inducing the populace or a government to agree to demands in order to avoid harm or the fear of harm. Terrorists employ diverse tactics to destabilize a stable government, motivate a dissatisfied populace to join the unrest, and escalate conflicts to disrupt the existing state. Political parties, nationalistic groups, and governments use terrorism to reach their objectives. Terrorism is classified into categories such as political, non-political, quasi, limited political, official or state, and structural. As with everything else, terrorism has its own causes which could include world overpopulation resulting in corruption and poverty. Extremism and intolerance is the second cause of terrorism, and finally, atrocity is the third cause¹. The word terrorism is rarely used when the enemy is identifiable.

The origin of terrorism in South Asia begins with the partition of Pakistan from India in 1947, which divided Hindus and Muslims who had lived together for hundreds of years and has led to endless boundary disputes between the two countries. To train combatants to fight on the joint border with India, some schools called MADRASAS (which means religious schools) were established in areas that were not under complete control of the Pakistan government. When Russian troops invaded Afghanistan, these religious schools were then used to train combatants, both Afghans and non-Afghans, to fight against Russian and Afghan government troops. While the Taliban ruled Afghanistan, Taliban fighters, Al-Qaeda, and Pakistani terrorists and extremists were trained in these schools, and the process continues. Today many

wanted terrorist leaders in the world have been hiding themselves in areas where the Pakistan government does not have control; areas that are near Afghanistan. Below are the most wanted terrorists:²



Usama Bin Laden



Adam Yahye Gadahn



Abdelkarim Hussein Mohamed Al-Nasser



Abdullah Ahmed



Abdullah



Ayman

Ali Atwa

Al-Zawahiri



Anas Al-Liby



Fazul Abdullah Mohammed



Hasan Izz-Al-Din



Ahmed Mohammed Hamed Ali



Imad Fayeز
Mugniyah



<u>Abdul Rahman Yasin</u>	<u>Fahid Mohammed Ally Msalam</u>	<u>Ahmad Ibrahim Al-Mughassil</u>
		
<u>Ali Saed Bin Ali El-Hoorie</u>	<u>Saif Al-Adel</u>	<u>Ibrahim Salih Mohammed Al-Yacoub</u>
		
<u>Ramadan Abdullah Mohammad Shallah</u>	<u>Abd Al Aziz Awda</u>	<u>Isnilon Totoni Hapilon</u>
		
<u>Mohammed Ali Hamadei</u>	<u>Jamel Ahmed Mohammed Ali Al-Badawi</u>	<u>Jaber A. Elbaneh</u>
		

Table 1:

Key Criteria. Most definitions outline the following key criteria of terrorism in Afghanistan and the region³:

Violence and the threat of violence are the only general characteristics of terrorism upon which all are generally agreed. However, acts like war, riot, organized crime, and simple assault are not considered terrorism.

Psychological Impact & Fear. Terrorists attack in such a way as to maximize the violence and its psychological effect. The main goal of a terrorist attack is to create a desired impact on many large audiences. To show their power and to shake the foundation of the country, terrorists also attack national symbols of countries they

oppose, which may negatively affect governments' legitimacy while increasing the legitimacy of the terrorist organization or ideology behind the terrorist attack.

Perpetrated for A Political Goal. Terrorist attacks are conducted for a political purpose. Terrorism is described as a political tactic; it is not like letter writing or demonstrations employed by activists when they think no other methods will cause the kind of change they want. Terrorists desire the change so badly that they see their failure to create the change as a much worse outcome than the deaths of civilians or non-combatants.

Deliberate Targeting of Non-Combatants. The nature of terrorism, which is distinctive, lies in its deliberate and specific selection of non-combatants as direct targets. Much of the time, the reason the victims of terrorism are targeted is not because they are threats, but rather because they are symbols, tools, or corrupt beings which tie into a specific view of the world that the terrorists reject. The pain the victims suffer accomplishes the terrorists' goal of instilling fear and getting a message out to audiences.

Disguise. Terrorists almost constantly act as if they are non-combatants, hiding among non-combatants, fighting in the midst of non-combatants/civilians, and attempting to mislead and provoke the government troops to attack the wrong people so that the government may be blamed for it. The Taliban & Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan offer the best examples here.

Type of terrorism

The following are common types of terrorism in Afghanistan:

- **Political terrorism** — Criminal behavior which causes violence and generates fear among the populace for political purposes.
- **Non-political terrorism** — Actions are not aimed to achieve political goals, but are conducted to create and maintain a high degree of fear, the purpose being coercive, where the end is individual and/or collective gain.
- **Limited political terrorism** — The purpose here is not to capture control of the state, however, acts of terrorism are committed for ideological/political motives.
- **Official or state terrorism** refers to nations that rule based on fear and oppression which reach near to terrorism or such an extent.

Tactics

Different tactics are used by terrorists to maximize fear and publicity. Terrorists usually plan their attacks in advance, train their participants, and get money from their supporters or through organized crime⁴. In general terrorists use the following tactics:

- Arson: Uses fire to damage, sabotage or destroy property. Results can be reached with simple tools and minimum training. Although arson is basically used against property, and is not usually planned as a casualty producer, it may have victims. Arson is employed for symbolic attacks, and economic outcomes.

- Sabotage: Is used to destroy the enemy's equipment and infrastructure. Through sabotage, terrorists mean to cause psychological and physical damage. Saboteurs destroy or disrupt key services or facilities, and demonstrate their power on the public consciousness, which may increase a target population's frustration with the ineffectiveness of the government, or may inspire others to resist. A terrorist group, in order to strengthen the perception that nothing is safe, generally aims its sabotage actions at elements of infrastructure. Some examples of potential targets could be water purification plants, air traffic control, sewage treatment facilities, control hubs, and medical treatment or research facilities. Techniques such as bombing, arson, cyber or use of contaminants are employed by terrorists to conduct sabotage.
- Bombing: Terrorists' main weapons are bombs. Bombs are very destructive and can be simply tailored to the mission. There is no need for an operator to be present when bombs are being used, and they encompass considerable physical and psychological impact. Terrorists also use bombings as a technique to conduct other operations like sabotage or assassination. In addition, bombing is a tactic to cause terror through destruction and casualties produced by their explosive power.
- Kidnapping: This is an action which is taken for a specific reason against an individual who is well-known. Ransom, release of a fellow terrorist, or the desire to make a demand widely known to the public are common reasons for kidnapping. Detailed planning concerning movement of the kidnapped

individual is conducted by the terrorist cell. The kidnapped victim is taken to a location that is under control of the cell. The group makes demands and is willing to hold a victim for a specific time. Success of kidnapping depends on balancing the cost to the government represented by the threat of harm to the victim with the cost of meeting the kidnappers demand. Some kidnapping operations are actually assassinations with killing of the victim as an intended outcome. Kidnapping can also be used as a means of financing an organization.

- Hostage taking: Terrorists take hostages to gain publicity for a cause, gain political concessions/asylum, gain release of prisoners, or obtain ransom money. In many instances terrorists take hostages with the intent to kill them when they believe they have exploited the media coverage from the situation. There is a difference between kidnapping and hostage taking. In a kidnapping the victim is a well-known figure, whereas hostages are not considered well-known individuals in the society. Hostage situations are often fraught with danger for the terrorist group when they are conducted in enemy territory. Terrorists attempt to hold hostages in a friendly or neutral area wherever possible. Mass execution of hostages is not commonly called terrorism; it constitutes a crime against humanity.
- Suicide attacks: To achieve a military or political goal an attacker commits an act of violence against others which results in his/her own death. Suicide attack is the most common tactic used by terrorists in Afghanistan. Senior state officials, military convoys, NATO, ISAF, and Coalition forces are the

main targets of suicide bombers. As an example, in 2008 there were 122 suicide attacks in Afghanistan that killed 258 ISAF troops and more than one thousand innocent civilians. Usually the explosive is placed on the upper part of an attacker's body which helps him/her not to be identified after the attack.

- Raid & Ambush: In concept, a terrorist raid is similar to a conventional operation; however it is usually conducted with smaller forces against the target. A terrorist raid results in destruction, hijacking, or hostage taking. A raid allows control of a target for execution of some other action. An ambush is a rapid, surprise attack that is characterized by violent execution and speedy action. The goal may be to cause a lot of casualties, assassinate someone, or disrupt hostile security operations. Common weapons in terrorists' ambushes are bombs and directional mines. Small arms, automatic weapons, and rocket launchers are often used as well.

Political Stability

Politically, there are noticeable developments in Afghanistan that appear to be the first steps leading the country to stability and peace. The Bonn process mapped a step by step transition towards increasingly legitimate power structures, culminating in the establishment of a fully representative and freely elected government.⁵

- The first step was completed with the establishment of the Afghan Interim Authority on December 22, 2001 under the chairmanship of Hamid Karzai. The members of the authority were selected from and by the participants in the Bonn talks. The Interim Authority exercised sovereignty for a period of six

months and established the basic institutions mandated by the Bonn Agreement.

- An emergency grand assembly (Loya Jirga-e Ezterari) to appoint a transitional administration was held in June 2002. The 1,500 emergency grand assembly delegates (including over 200 women) ultimately constituted a representative sampling of Afghan society and its political balance. The assembly elected Hamid Karzai to head the Transitional Administration.
- The next step in the political transition was completed with the holding of a constitutional grand assembly (Loya Jirga-e Qanoon-e Asasi) in December 2003 and January 2004. The Constitution adopted by the constitutional grand assembly on January 4th, 2004 established a unified Islamic State based on the rule of law. It provides for a political system that is presidential in nature, but with a large degree of parliamentary oversight.
- Under the terms of the Bonn Agreement, presidential elections were held in 2004. The presidential elections were contested by 18 candidates, including one woman. Polling day was marked by a high turnout of voters (70 per cent) and an absence of major security incidents. President Karzai won the election with 55.4 per cent of the vote. A new cabinet selected in conformity with the constitution's requirements and with a view to achieving ethnic balance was established.
- In September 2005 Parliamentary elections were held. Members of the 249 seat lower house and the 102 member upper house were sworn in marking a major milestone towards the fledgling state's future peace and stability.

- The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process supported by the United Nations Development Program and under the leadership of Japan began in October 2003. It had two major components: the demobilization of soldiers from existing military units and the cantonment of heavy weapons. Participants in the Berlin conference of April 2004 resolved to demobilize the 100,000 targeted soldiers and to canton all heavy weapons prior to the elections.
- The Afghan National Army, which is still being formed, will consist of 134,000 soldiers when at full strength. Currently it consists of 90,000 troops.
- Training, staffing and sustaining an effective police force is a vital element in assuring security and the rule of law in Afghanistan. Like the Afghan National Army, the Afghan National Police is being formed too.
- The process of reforming the justice sector has been going on.
- The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission has been established and tasked to monitor human rights within the country. It serves to bring human rights concerns to the attention of the Government, the Public and the International Community in a systematic manner as well.

Economic Reconstruction

Much has been done in seven years to aid Afghanistan economic reconstruction. Afghanistan is much more an agricultural country than an industrial one, and to rebuild the Afghanistan economy there have been many land mine clearance operations to free the agricultural fields from mines placed there over the past three decades of war.

Afghanistan is a very strategic location for investors, thus Afghan related departments and authorities have provided investment opportunities to both national and international investors. Many have invested in telecommunication, modern technology, agriculture, handicraft, rebuilding roads, education, industry, and health care. Afghan exports are on the rise, and in the last year exports have gone up between 12% and 13%. Afghan exports include handicrafts, fresh and dry fruit, minerals, leather products, cotton and precious stones which have gone to the US, India, China, Pakistan, UAE, and Europe. The Afghan authorities have drawn the international community's attention to assist Afghanistan economically, and as a result there have been international conferences held, in London, Tokyo, Europe and Afghanistan itself to help Afghanistan.

There are short-term priorities for the reconstruction period which include the following:

1. Agricultural recovery on a standardized level with modern methods and equipment.
2. Livelihood generation for returning refugees and displaced people.
3. Support to existing communities through the provision of basic services and small-scale development and empowerment programs.
4. Rapid rehabilitation of Afghanistan's main road network.
5. Expansion of the de-mining program.
6. Massive short-run employment generation through public works programs.
7. Re-starting and expanding key social services like education and health, with a focus on reaching girls and women, especially in rural areas.

8. Human capacity mobilization for social services, infrastructure, and public administration.

Drug Mafia

Opium cultivation in Afghanistan has occurred for years, and Afghans have used it for medical purposes for decades. As such, this plant was cultivated in limited amounts depending on the needs and requirements in the country. During the Soviet invasion and the civil war, cultivation of opium increased. Since Afghanistan did not have a powerful regime during these periods, the government had no control over the entire area of the country, and part of the territory in Afghanistan was under the control of armed opposition groups. Opium cultivation was encouraged by neighboring countries too, and it was smuggled through these countries to the world markets. The Soviet Union's military was also involved in trafficking opium by air and land to the world markets and this was another reason which caused increasing opium cultivation in the country. After the Soviet withdrawal and the Afghan government downfall, the Mujahidin took power and opium cultivation increased even more since the militia groups, international mafia, and terrorists in the region benefited from it. When the Taliban ruled the country, opium cultivation was legalized and increased more than ever, because the Taliban considered cultivation of opium as supportive of the struggle against their enemies. The following shows the cultivation rate of opium and potential opium production in Afghanistan⁶.

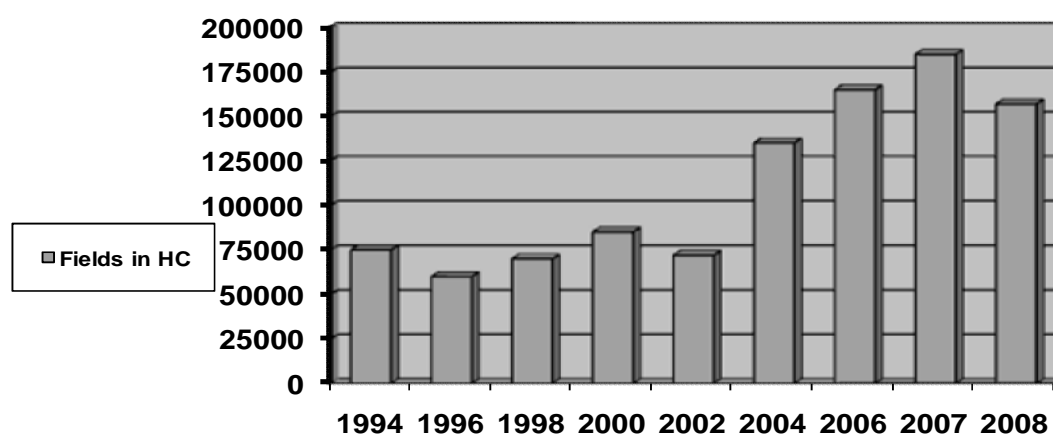


Table 2:

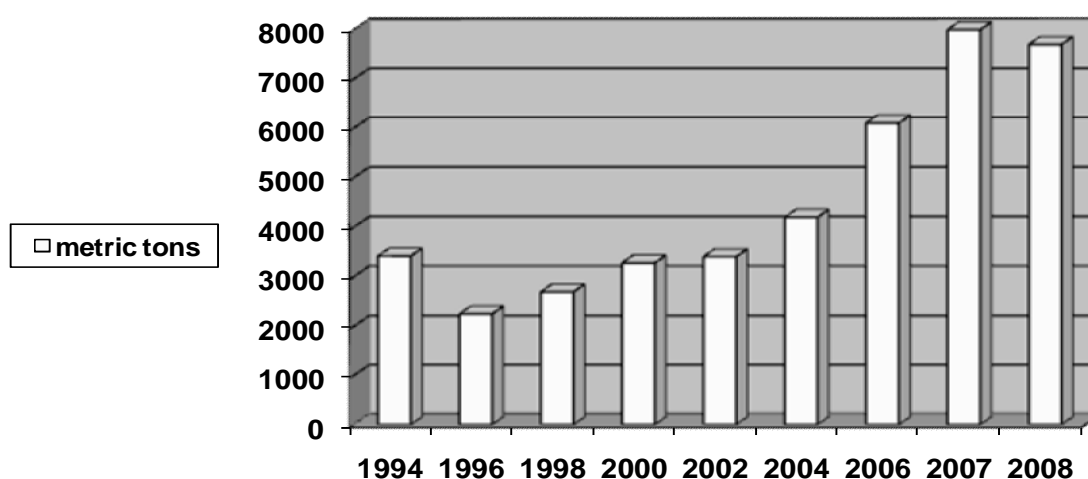


Table 3: Potential Opium Production

One must remember that trafficking opium was one of the sources for Taliban and Al-Qaeda to arm and equip their forces. When the Taliban collapsed, the international community failed to pay essential attention to preventing the increase of cultivation and trafficking of drugs. According to the Bonn Agreement, international

community and Afghan government have the responsibility to decrease and eliminate drug cultivation & trafficking, but their efforts have been less successful and opium cultivation has continued to increase even more than before.

Causes for the Increase of Opium Cultivation in Afghanistan.

- There are not enough competent security forces to stop drug cultivation and trafficking.
- The government and coalition lack complete control of territory where drugs have been cultivated, especially in the South, South East, and South West which are under control of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda.
- The Afghan government and its allies are not able to take control of the borders.
- Trafficking drugs by internal and external mafia to neighboring and other countries.

Measures Undertaken by Afghan Government to Deal with the Challenges

The most important issue Afghanistan encounters as a challenge is security. To solve this challenge, the government in Afghanistan has made the decision to build an army able to defend the Afghan territory, a military equipped with modern weapons and technology that meets this requirement. To reach the total number of 134,000 soldiers is one of the country's priorities. The same decision has been made regarding police forces, with the number of policemen and policewomen eventually growing to 80,000.

Greater cooperation is needed among Afghan, Pakistani, US, and NATO militaries in the border areas. The Afghan government should form Border Police Units to police and maintain its borders.

One of the ways to decrease and stop poppy cultivation is to create an alternate livelihood for farmers currently growing poppy. The Afghan government constantly seeks to draw the international community's attention to this point. Poverty and unemployment are the other challenges Afghans have been facing and the Afghan Ministry of Social Affairs has been tasked to find employment opportunities for Afghans both in the country and out of the country. To help resolve these issues, efforts to find good employment opportunities inside the country have been progressing by building industrial factories and preparing agricultural fields to grow different crops.

The education system in Afghanistan has deteriorated; relevant departments including the Ministry of Education were tasked to improve the system to a high and standardized level currently existing throughout the region and world. Although there are some private schools, colleges, and universities, other efforts are expected to enhance educational opportunities. Decades of war have destroyed most of the infrastructure and the country is littered with mines and bombs. Severe drought, food shortages, and human rights abuses have displaced millions of people. The Afghan government has drawn the attention of international community to three issues and has asked some countries to provide financial support to rebuild the infrastructure. As a result, the trade highway linking the capital to the South was rebuilt. Much more is being done which includes irrigation, agriculture, rebuilding schools, health facilities, municipal facilities, etc. Reconstruction of the country's principle road system is key to Afghanistan economic recovery.

Success Achieved and Future Efforts

As stated above there are visible successes Afghans have achieved in the seven years since the Taliban collapse, the most important one is forming of the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police. The process of improving the security sector continues, and further efforts are necessary to equip the security sector with modern weapons and equipment.

To build infrastructure in Afghanistan is one of the priorities, although much has been done, it is not sufficient. To enable people to get connected to the government, to allow security forces to expand their security operations, and to facilitate merchant trading, it is imperative to rebuild roads connecting villages, towns, cities, and provinces. Up to now more than 45,000 km road in the country have been built. Since Afghans lack capacity, and it is vital to build it, donations from the rest of the world are significant for this reconstruction. It is also notable that during the past seven years a number of educated Afghans have returned back to their homeland.

To exploit and utilize natural resources is another goal in Afghanistan. A contract between Afghanistan and China has been completed for utilizing a copper mine 35 km south-east of Kabul, and it is significant to use other natural resources in the country to help improve the economy.

Water resources are used for three purposes: irrigation, producing electric power, and drinking. In comparison to seven years ago, more water resources have been tapped, but they are still insufficient, and much of the water flows out of the country because there is little capacity to capture it for the above purposes.

To eradicate opium fields, there is need to create alternate livelihoods for people growing this plant. Though the Afghan government and international community have made some efforts, they are woefully inadequate, and more must be done.

From the very forming of the Afghan National Army (ANA), more than 10,000 military operations have been conducted, but military operations are not the only ways to return stability, peace and normalcy to the country. Talks and negotiations are necessary and effective ways too, and must be continued.

To conclude, Afghanistan is a battle stricken country which has been economically weakened due to three decades of war. Geographically it remains a boundary and buffer state between South and Central Asian countries, as well as between land and sea powers. Whatever affects Afghanistan also impacts the neighboring countries and the region. Terrorism as an evil phenomenon has ruined the country, taken many lives, and caused countless casualties. Terrorists turned the country to one of their strongholds. They have cultivated narcotics to finance their forces. After September 11, 2001, the international community identified them dangerous not only to Afghanistan and the region, but also to the world as a whole, and within the framework of the United Nations Organization made the decision to send Peace Enforcement Forces which include International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF), NATO, and COALITION to help Afghans suppress the Taliban & Al-Qaeda. Indeed, Afghans have been doing their best to bring back peace and stability to their country. Being an active member of the international community is one of Afghanistan's desires, and for that reason Afghanistan has made every effort to build a powerful security sector. In addition to the security sector in Afghanistan, other governmental and

non-governmental organizations are working closely with the international community to restore peace. Now it is up to Afghans, their friendly countries, and the world not to let terrorism again target humanity, and take victims.

Endnotes

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorism>

² <http://www.fbi.gov/wanted/terrorists/fugitives.htm>

³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorism>

⁴ US Army TRADOC, TRADOC G2 Handbook No.1, A Military Guide to Terrorism in the Twenty First Century US Army Training and Doctrine Command, TRADOC G2, TRADOC Intelligence Support Activity - Threats Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 15 August 2007

⁵ United Nations, General Assembly, Security Council, Fifty-Ninth Session

⁶ United Nations, Office on Drugs & Crimes, Afghanistan Opium Survey , August 2007

http://www.swivel.com/data_sets/show/1016492